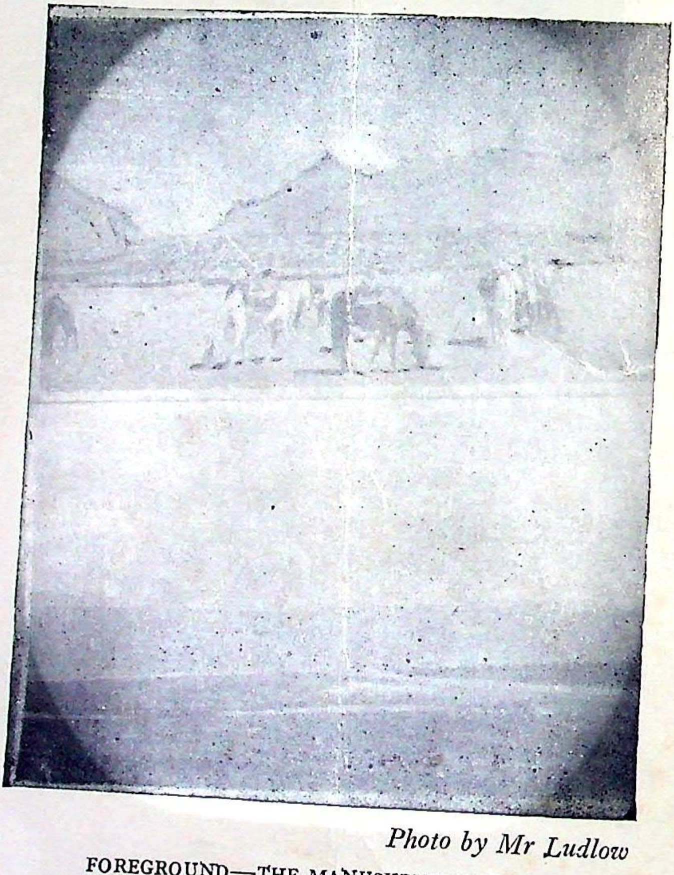


*Photo by Mr Ludlow*

FOREGROUND—THE MANUSURUWAR LAKE
BEYOND—SNOW PEAK OF SACRED MOUNT KAILAS
IN W. TIBET

# KHIR BHAWANI SPRING
## KASHMIR, INDIA

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# KHIR BHAWANI

## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

THE whole of Kashmir Mandal is a place of pilgrimage. Almost all villages, either contain a tree or a spring or some relic dedicated to some god, goddess or a saint. Even the name of the place owes its origin to the same cause. All charming places have been named after some deity. It is a pity that some have been quite forgotten, and some have names in corrupt form which are interpreted incorrectly. Round about Gangabal there are a number of lakes, Vishna Sar, Gardu Sar etc., but Gardu Sar is generally called Gàda Sar. Gàd means a fish, while Garuda is the vehicle of Vishnu. I was once shown a peak in the Lidder Valley which was named Kràl (potter), but actually, it meant Vekràl (dreadful). Again, I remember, once an Englishman asked a person, what Mahadiv meant. He told him 'a great giant', while the word really means 'a Great God'. To guard against similar errors in respect of Khir Bhawàni, I tried to collect a little information regarding this most beautiful and peace-bestowing spring of Kashmir, in the hope that some of the queries from visitors outside Kashmir may thereby be answered and that the future researcher may be helped in investigating fully the natural phenomenon associated with the place.

There is no lack of information regarding these places, but those who possess it are loathe to give it to the public. It was with great difficulty that I could get a Sanskrit-manuscript for one day and a Sanskrit knowing friend of mine went through it during the same night.

In writing out these pages I am indebted to Shri Govind Bhat Shashtri for translating Sanskrit verses, to the late Mahanand Joo Dhar for some of the information about the place, to Shri Shridher Koul for improvements in its structure, to Shri S. N. Raina for drawing Chakra, and to Shri Lokesh Koul for typing the manuscript.

*Motiyar, Rainawari*
*Srinagar, Kashmir* SAMSAR CHAND KOUL
*August 15, 1954*

## PREFACE TO THE FOURTH EDITION

IN THE interests of Pilgrims-cum-tourists desirous of paying a visit to this Holy Spring of all India fame which each year attracts an ever increasing number of devotees and admirers it has been found desirable to publish the fourth edition of this book with additions and alterations where ever necessary.

The second edition of the book was combined with the "Mysterious Cave of Amarnath" which was again separated in the third edition.

In writing these pages, I am thankful to Pt. Shridhar Joo for his various valuable suggestions regarding the improvement of the book.

*Srinagar-190 003* LOKESH KAUL

*Kashmir*

*August 15, 1981*

# KHIR BHAVANI

KASHMIR in the olden times was known as Reshi Bhumi or the land of saints. Cut off as it was from the outside world by its mountain ramparts, its means of communication were difficult. The people had developed their own script called 'sharda' and their own literature and philosophy. They cultivated various branches of knowledge, and worked for humanity preferring action to theory.

Surrounded as the country is by the snow-clad high mountains, water absorbed in the soil gives birth to numerous springs scattered all over the country. Those springs are known as Nàgs (serpents). They are dedicated to different gods or goddesses, hence some of the towns are named after them, such as Anant Nàg, Vetsàr Nàg. Tsandi Gàm (after Tsandi Nàg in the Lolàb Valley) and Ver Nàg in Anantnag district. Special days are set apart in the calendar to commemorate the story of those springs and fairs are held and public worship takes place on such occasions.

One of these mysterious springs is situated near Ganderbal in the village of Tulamulla. The whole place round Tulamulla is swampy and for miles around there are rice fields. By the side of acqueducts grow a large variety of wild flowers, the most common being Mentha sylvestris (Vena) which is used in worship and the sale of which brings money to the peasant population.

It appears that Tulamulla is a sort of floating garden, as the natives say that if they dig a whole in the ground, they find fish coming from the tributary of the Sindh which drains the place. The village is girt round by the tributaries of the Sindh which carry water from the Amar Nath and Gangabal glaciers. There is also a stream of pure water which rises from the springs round the eastern side of the village and passing under a bridge enters into the Sindh canal (also called Gangkhai).

The numerous islets are covered with willows and poplars while the main island on which the spring stands is shaded with chinars, mulberry and elm trees. Lately, the place has been paved with dressed sandstones, but there is much scope for the improvement and tidiness of the spot. Water and vegetation being very abundant, mosquitoes are ubiquitous in July and August. In summer, the birds nestling on trees produce melodious music at dawn. The golden oriole, the thrush, the ringdove, the paradise flycatcher, the bulbul are conspicuous by their song and plumage. In winter the wild fowl, the shoveller, the mallard, the gadwall, the widgeon, the teal, the paddy bird, the coot and such other birds are found in the Añchàr Lake and round about the swamps.

## The Añchàr Lake

The Añchàr (Atsàr)[1] Lake must have once touched the skirts of the Làr and Ganderbal

[1] Atsar means good conduct.

mountain ranges and the alluvial soil wrested from the lake is the outcome of the silt which the Sindh and rain have deposited here for hundreds of years. This process is still going on and extensive tongues of land in the form of deltas between several distributaries are being formed continually. About seventy years ago the Sindh changed its course, flowed over Gadura village and thence entered the lake. A tributary from here joins the Vetastà (Jhelum) at Shàdipor. Two canals drain the water of the Dal Lake into the Añchàr Lake. The Nàla Bal flows past the north of Hàri Parbat via Amdà Kadal, and the other canal used to flow through Bohri Kadal during summer months. The later canal has been filled up under the master plan and does not exist now. The best lotus blossom is found towards the southern side of the lake called Khushàl Sar during the months of July and August. It is fascinating to watch the pheasant-tailed Jacana in gorgeous plumage and the paddy bird in sombre colour. The lake yields large quantities of lotus seeds and lotus roots which are eaten as a vegetable. Fishing is also carried on in it. It supplies fodder for animals to the city.

There are two important springs on the eastern side of the lake. Amrishwar spring in Amburher which was a great place of pilgrimage in olden times and a spring in Biyhàma which is highly prized for digestive water.

The lake is about $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles long and $2\frac{1}{4}$ miles broad and covers an area of about $7\frac{1}{2}$ sq. miles.

There are better floating gardens here than in the Dal Lake.

Before wheeled traffic came into being the pilgrims to the spring went on foot or by boat. The religious-minded preferred the journey on foot. From Srinagar they either went to Sowura Ghàt or to the Grön Kadal where they engaged a boat and crossing the Añchár Lake landed at Gàḍur. From here they walked through rice fields and in about 4 or 5 hours arrived at Tulamulla.

Others engaging a doonga or a house-boat from Srinagar in the Vetastà (Jhelum) reach Shàdipor where the confluence of the Sind and the Vetastà takes place. This place is also called prayág and is sacred to the Hindus. From here the boat is towed up the canal along the delightful turfed banks and finally anchored at the island. The journey covers about 8 or 9 hours.

Now lorries and cars run to the place and cover a distance of 14 miles in about 40 minutes. The pilgrim, no doubt saves much of his time in this way but he actually wraps his vacation in a wet blanket and has, to his credit merely the satisfaction that he has visited the place.

## Vetsạr Nàg

On the way to Ganderbal there is a spring called Vetsàr Nàg which is 8 kms. from Srinagar. It is said, that in the olden days the new calendar used to be discussed here before it came into circulation. Vetsàr means discussion. The pilgrimage to this place takes place on the

Amavasa (last day of dark fortnight) of Chet. This spring is also called Ailapatör after the high-altitude lake of Gulmarg. The spring was once cleansed. In the centre of the spring there is a stone cylinder about 3 ft. high on which rests a stone Shivlingam. The water gushes out from the north-eastern and north-western corners and fills the spring.

### Ganderbal

Ganderbal is the terminus of the boat journey. Its lovely turfed banks, shady chinars, the graceful flow of the Sindh, the delightful mountain slopes in the distance and the refreshing breeze which blows from the pine-clad mountain slopes of the upper Sindh Valley are very soothing to the wearied body and mind. It lies at the base of the Sindh Valley and was originally called Dodèrhom. It is the official headquarters of the Sindh Valley and has a regular bàzààr, a post office, a veterinary hospital and a hospital for men and a Government Higher Secondary Schools for Boys and Girls. Some visitors engage house-boats and spend some time under shady chinars. There are some interesting spots round about the place which can be easily visited from here. A morning walk of about 3 miles will take a person to the Khir Bhawàni spring. About 6 miles from here lies the famous Mànasbal lake. From Vàyil bridge about 2½ miles from here a glorious view of the Sindh Valley flanked by verdant mountain slopes can be had.

At Ganderbal there is an electric power-house which supplies light to Srinagar city and adds to the present electric supply of the valley.

**Historical Reference**

Mention of this place is made in the last chapter of the *Ràgyña Pradurbhava* which is a section of the *Bringish Samhita*. It is stated there that during the early period of the Epic Age, King Ràvaṇa ruled Lanka, an island to the south of India. It was then a flourishing country having sixteen hundred towns. This island is beautifully described in the *Ràmàyaṇa*.

King Ràvaṇa in order to gain temporal power and glory worshipped goddess Pàrvati (Shàma) who manifested herself to him in all her nine aspects. For sometime he remained sober-minded and worshipped the goddess with all devotion.

When Shri Ràma King of Ajoydiya invaded Laṅkà and the generals of his army Sugrev and Hunumàn killed King Ràvaṇa's brother Kumbakaruna and his son Megnàd, his wife Mandudhari entreated him to make peace with Shri Ràma. He was kindled with rage and tried to invoke the blessing of the goddess by offering her various kinds of sacrifices. Thereupon the goddess, wrathful at Ràvaṇa's misdeeds, cursed him and ordered Hunumàn to take her to Sati Sar (Kashmir) on her vehicle along with 360 Nàgs. Hunumàn selected a spot in the northern side of the valley within the space surrounded

by the villages of Borus (Bhawanish),[1] Ahatung (Tungish), Ladwun (Labdawan), Wokur (Bhageh). Here he installed the goddess with all her satellites. She was called Khirbhawáni or Raji Rágyñi, exclusively prefering milk, sugar, rice and all vegetarian forms of offerings. To quote from Stein's translation of Kalhana's *Rajatarangini:* "When he (Jayapida) was appropriating (the land of) *Tulamulya*, he heard, while on the bank of the *Candrabhaga*, that a hundred Brahmans less one had sought death in the water of that (stream)."......

" *Tulamulya* is undoubtedly the present village of *Tulamul*, situated 74° 48′ long. 34° 13′ lat. among the marshes through which the Sind River passes before joining the *Vitasta*. The large spring of Tulmul is sacred as the habitation of *Maharajni*, a form of *Durga* extensively worshipped among the Brahman population of Kashmir, and is accordingly to this day the object of frequent and popular pilgrimages. The name is written as Tulamulaka in Fourth Chron. 527, 531 and in Rajnipradurbhavamah."

" In the midst of the wide water-logged tract of the Sind Delta we find the ancient Tirtha of Tū-lamū-lya at the village now know as *Tulmul*, situated 74° 48′ long. 34° 13′ lat. The Purohita corporation of Tūlamūlya is represented as a well-to-do and influential body already under King Jayāpīda. (A.D. 85 and 88) The large spring of *Tulamulya* is sacred to *Maharajni*, a

[1] In brackets are the old names of villages.

form of *Durga*, and is still held in great veneration by the Brahman population of Srinagar. It is supposed to exhibit from time to time miraculous changes in the colour of its water, which are ascribed to the manifestation of the goddess. Owing to its convenient position the Tirtha attracts large numbers of pilgrims from the capital. Abū-I-Fazal notices the place and its marshy surroundings. About two and a half miles to the east of Tulamul lies the village of Dudrhom on the main branch of the Sind which have become first navigable. It is repeatedly referred to by Srivara under its old name of Dugdhasrama."

"The worship of the 'Mothers', which is identical with that of the Saktis, plays a great part in the Tantra ritual flourishing in Kashmir from ancient times."

It is said that Rávaṇa's father Pulasti Reshi lived in Kashmir.

The land was all swampy, made as it were of floating gardens, it was light and bumpy, hence it was called Toola Mulla, from two Sanskrit words. 'Tool' meaning 'cotton' and 'Mulla' meaning 'value', 'worth'.

A person aged about 90 (in 1948) told me that he knew the time when reeds were placed along the swampy foot-path from Hur Mengiñ Wör[2] to enable the pilgrims to walk to the island.

[2] Hur Mengan was a Spirit who sometimes possessed the bodies of the persons travelling during the night and he was a dread to the inhabitants of the neighbourhood.

After some time a road was constructed by Mahant Dharm Dass. Shah Ràdha Krishen, a merchant, paved the edge of the spring with Bàràmulla stones and Dewan Narsingh Dayál built the big dharmsàla on the north of the spring during the reign of Mahàràja Ranbir Singh. Later on, during recent times the road was metalled (macadamised) and made fit for wheeled traffic. The old dharmsàla has been dismantled, new ones erected and the place made more beautiful.

There is a legend that a long time ago the goddess appeared to Pandit Govind Joo Gáḍru who arranged to go in a boat from Sowura Ghat to the swampy side of the Añchár Lake. He took with him a number of earthen vessels full of milk and when he found the spring, he poured milk into it.

The following is another version of the process which is said to have brought the spring to light.

A pious Brahman Krishna Pandit saw a vision in which he was informed by a Deva (an angel) that the spring of Khir Bhawáni lay among the swamps of Tulamulla.

'How shall I be able to find out the spring?' He asked.

'Engage a boat as far as Shádipor, and from there a serpent will guide you. When you will reach near the spring, the serpent will jump into it. That is the spring', was the reply.

He did as he was told, engaged a boat and came as far as Shádipor.

## Khirbhawani

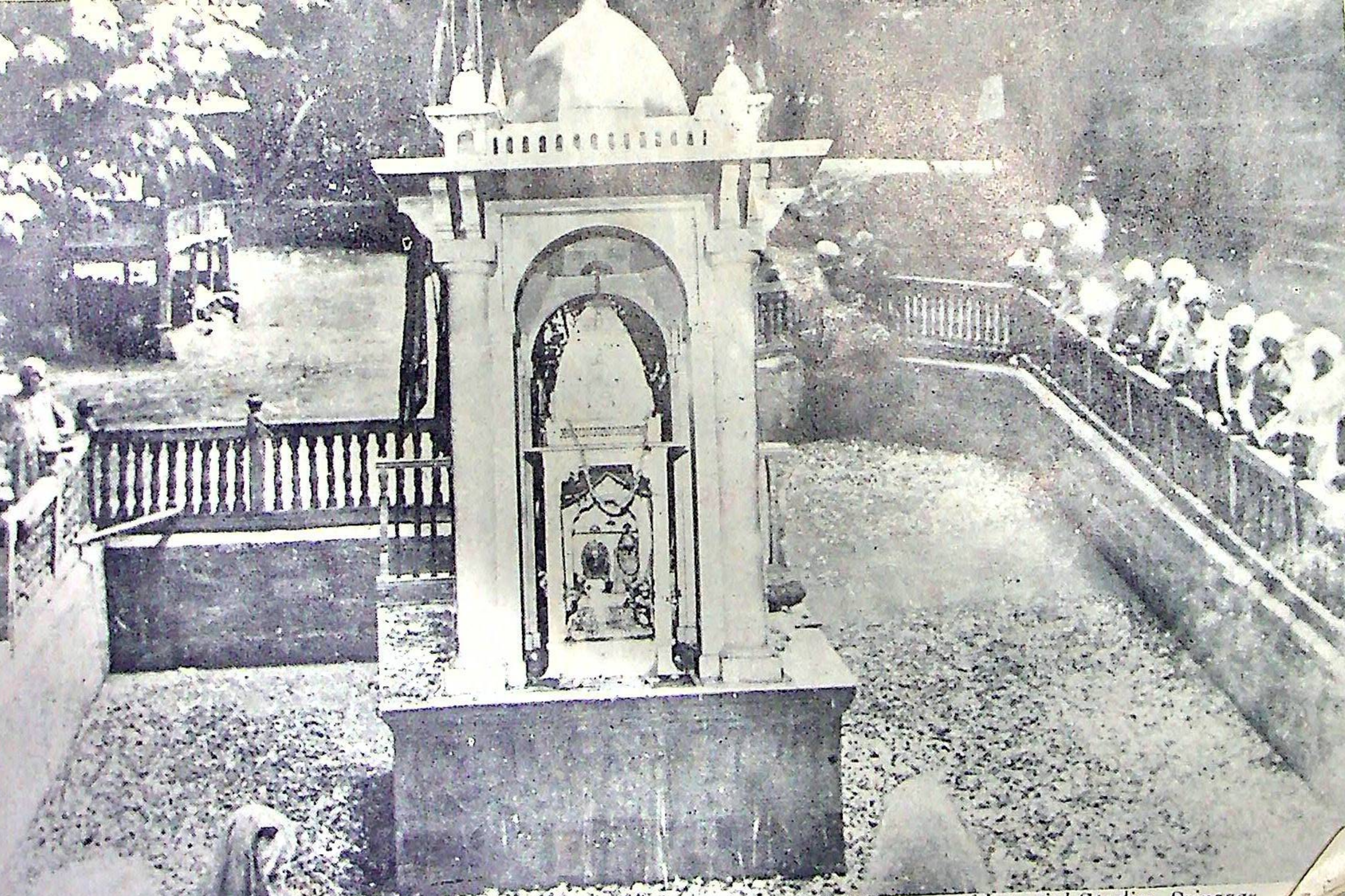
A snake was seen swimming over the water of the swamps. The boat followed the snake which halted at a particular place where Shri Krishna Pandit fixed a long stick to indicate the position of the holy spot. After the snake moved in an oddly rectangular direction, the space thus covered by it was demarcated with the fixation of sticks over the marshy area. Thus was the divine spring discovered.

The swampy area around the spring was filled up with dry earth carried in boats for this purpose. Shri Krishna Pandit along with other respectable persons and devotees from Srinagar inaugurated the worship of the goddess. At the conclusion of the puja, it is said that a piece of birch bark was seen floating over the water of the spring. Shri Krishna Pandit took it up and found the sloka written on it. The verse described the divine form of the goddess Rágni.

या द्वादशार्क परीपण्डित मूर्ति रेका
सिंहासन-स्थितिमती मुरगैर्वृतांच
देवी मनन्यगति रीपूवरतांप्रपन्नां
तां नौमि भर्गवपुषं परमार्थराज्ञीम्

*Translation*

I make obeisance to that one goddess who, having taken the position of the Supreme



By Courtesy of Imperial Studios, Srinagar

God is the Queen in reality, whose form is made of light and is adorned by (the lustre of) twelve suns, who cannot be observed through senses, who is seated on a throne and is wrapped with serpents.

He composed a poem of as many stanzas as there were letters in the sloka and this poem is still extant. He would pay a visit to the spring on every 8th day of the bright fortnight as long as he lived.

Gradually, this place became known all over Kashmir and people began to gather there to worship, while the people round the place sold milk, flowers and fuel to the pilgrims which gives them a good business.

Before we enter on the main island, we see two important places, one is the Ziarat of Mir Bàba Haider, a Muslim saint and the other is the Samád of Lobu Sháh who had miraculous powers and lived some 150 years ago.

Mention has been made in the *Rajatarangani* of Ràja Jiyapida (A.D. 850-88) confiscating the lands of the Brahmans of Tulamulla. The Brahmans troubled by the misdeeds of the Ràja went in a body to see him. They were detained by the courtiers. Thereupon, they raised a hue and cry and were called by the Ràja. They attacked him vehemently and one of them cursed him with the result that there and then a golden rod from the royal canopy fell on the Ràja, causing him a wound which proved incurable and brought about his death.

**Spring**

The spring is situated in the centre of the island round which the Gangkhai a canal from the Sind makes a circuit. It is said that this spring is surrounded by 360 springs. Most of these have fallen into oblivion and are covered with rushes and silted up.

Before the main spring came to be known the goddess was worshipped at Solur where under a chinar tree a spring still exists. This spot is called Devot Wöl boin. One mile north-east of this island near Lodwàn village is Ganesh Bal or Vodjen where Ganesh is worshipped. The other springs which are still known are: Ashta Rudhar to the south, Tsandar Nág to the south-east. Machi Nág, Nága Ràd, Gökhiñ Nàg are to the east.

The main spring dedicated to Goddess Khir Bháwani or Rágyñi has an irregular septagonal shape with apex called PAD (feet) to the east. The northern and southern sides are longer than the western side which is called SHER (head).

In the centre is an islet on which a temple must have existed once. There also grew a mulberry tree here. Now there is a small marble temple which was built by His late Highness the Mahàraja Partàp Singh. The small flags and miniature silver umbrellas presented to the goddess by the votaries are placed in the temple.

Here is reproduced an extract from "Talks with Swami Vivekananda" about the Holy Spring.

"Then Swamiji said, on the way back, he returned to Srinagar by the common route by which the pilgrims return. A few days after returning to Srinagar he went to visit Kshir Bhavani Devi and staying there for seven days worshipped the Devi and made Homa to Her with offerings of Kshir (condensed milk). Every day he used to worship the Devi with a maund of Khir as offering. One day, while worshipping, the thought arose in Swamiji's mind: "Mother Bhavani has been manifesting Her Presence here for untold years. The Mohammedans came and destroyed Her temple, yet the people of the place did nothing to protect Her. Alas, if I were then living, I could never have borne it silently." When, thinking in this strain, his mind was much oppressed with sorrow and anguish, he distinctly heard the voice of the Mother saying: "It was according to My desire that the Mohammedans destroyed this temple. It is My desire that I should live in a dilapidated temple, otherwise, can I not immediately erect a seven-storied temple of gold here if I like? What can you do? Shall I protect you or shall you protect me!" Swamiji said: "Since hearing that Divine Voice, I cherish no more plans. The idea of building Maths etc. I have given up; as Mother wills, so it will be." The disciple speechless with wonder began to think, "Did he not one day tell me that whatever I saw and heard was but the echo of the Atma within me, that there was nothing outside?"—and fearlessly spoke it out also—"Sir, you used

to say that Divine Voices are the echo of our inward thoughts and feelings ". Swamiji gravely said: " Whether it be internal or external, if you actually hear with your ears such a dis-embodied voice, as I have done, can you deny it and call it false? Divine Voices are actually heard, just as you and I are talking ".

The disciple without controverting accepted Swamiji's words, for his words always carried conviction.

## Natural Phenomenon

Such a mysterious spring is found nowhere in India. The water of the spring changes its colour from time to time. I have observed and found it rosy red, faint rosy, light green, lemon yellow, milky white and grey white on various occasions. There is no special time or definite period for this change of colour. Any shade of black colour is supposed to be inauspicious.

I have seen bubbles rising out of the water of the spring and forming three lines round the islet not regularly complete, but a part here and a part there though in perfect order. These lines are said to be the Dwàra of the Chakra.

## Chakra or Yantra of Rajni Devi (Tulamulla)

What is a Chakra? It is a mystic symbol. Every goddess has her own Chakra. The Chakra of Kshir Bhavani consists of seven parts enclosed one within the other. The Chakra popularly

known as Yantra embodies Mother Goddess with Her Shakties.

The people well-versed in various forms of Tantric cult take this mystic symbol to represent the inward psychic centres of the body and by concentrating on it under proper guidance are supposed to acquire various superphysical powers.

Tantrikism is the content of the Vedas and Agams and differs from one place to another challenging many syntheses. This is found amply in Agams in different system as invocations of female deities identical with Shakties. A specific power of goddess representing it is the time-honoured-form of worship. The worship offers a mystic blend of Brahmanical and Buddhist practices.

The Tantrikism has much influenced all countries, all ages, all places and all systems of philosophic thoughts and all ritualistic practices. Innumerable are the systems of Tantric worship called by different names, forms and systems. It has its own mine of literature with its celebrated authors. A few of them are enumerated below :

Agama Tantrikism
Yamala Tantrikism
Samyachara Tantrikism
Vajrayana Tantrikism
Kapalika Tantrikism
Saiva Tantrikism
Siddha Tantrikism

Like all other metaphysical reorientations Tantrikism is a way of worship. Tantrik symbolism and rituals elevate a man to a state of bliss leading to salvation. The Tantrik psycho-physical discipline formulates the diagram known as Chakra, Yantra and Yoga.

Rajni Devi (Kshir Bhavani Devi) has Her prescribed diagram for worship in Tantra Shastra which is reproduced here. It embodies the system as right-handed Tantrikism. The following is the system of Rajni Devi's diagram (Chakra) with her Shaktis as borne by the descriptions in the relative manuscripts and available literature on the subject.

# PUJA OF THE DEVI OR WORSHIP OF GODDESS RAJNIDEVI

*Dwara* (*Gate*) (*Outer line*)

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Animah Siddhi Namah<br>2. Mahima Siddhi Namah<br>3. Lagima Siddhi Namah<br>4. Eshata Siddhi Namah | Siddhis |

*Middle Line*

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Sarva Sankhobini Mudrayay Namah<br>2. Sarva Vidrawani Mudrayay Namah<br>3. Sarva Karshani Mudrayay Namah<br>4. Sarva Vashankari Mudrayay Namah | Mudra |

*Innermost line*

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Brahmi Shakty Namah<br>2. Maheshwari Shakty Namah<br>3. Kumari Shakty Namah<br>4. Vaishnavi Shakty Namah | Shaktis |

*Ashta Dal*

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Brahmey Namah<br>2. Maheshwaryay Namah<br>3. Kumarey Namah<br>4. Vaishnavey Namah<br>5. Varahey Namah<br>6. Narsimhey Namah<br>7. Indriyay Namah<br>8. Chamundey Namah | Adhishtratri Devis |

*Shath Kon*

1. Saraswatyay Namah
2. Lakshmeyay Namah
3. Ashta Dash-Bojayay Namah
4. Ashta Bojayay Namah
5. Dashannayay Namah
6. Gowriyay Namah

*Trikon*

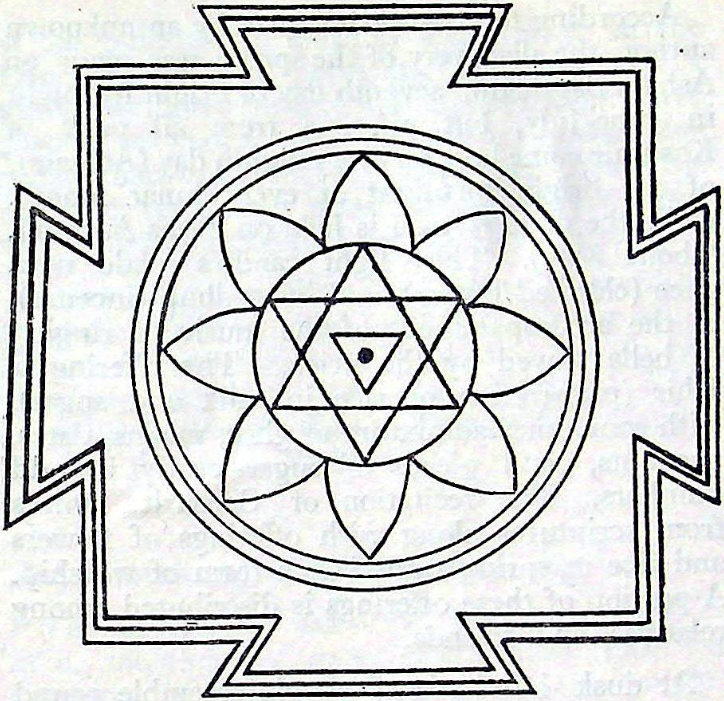
1. Maha Kaliyay Namah
2. Maha Saraswatyay Namah
3. Maha Lakshmeyay Namah

*Bindu* (*The Point*)

Shree Mah Rajniyay Namah

We meditate upon Shri Maha Rajni
"The Great Empress"
Who is the embodiment of peace and
Who is the giver of wealth that is sought

The people living round the island whether Hindus or Mohammedans have a great veneration for the goddess. They never eat meat when they have to go over there. They go there with their bodies and clothes washed.



| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Bindhu | A point. |
| 2. | Trikon (3 angled) | A triangle with its apex downwards. |
| 3. | Shaṭkon (6 angled) | Two triangles inverted. The vertices of the one resting on the side of the other. |
| 4. | Vaḷai | A circle. |
| 5. | Ashṭa Dal | Eight lotus leaves resting on the circle. |
| 6. | Tri Valai | Three circles. |
| 7. | Dwàr (gate) | Three lines with half triangles in the middle, enclosing all other parts and completing the Chakra. |

According to a Sanskrit stanza by an unknown author, the discovery of the spring was made on Ashára Sapthami,[1] seventh day of bright fortnight in June-July, but pilgrims from all parts of Kashmir come here on every eighth day (Ashṭami) of the bright fortnight of every lunar month, while the chief festival is held on Zeṭha Ashṭami, (about May). They light candles made from ghee (clarified butter), and burn dhup (incense), to the accompaniment of the music of ringing of bells played by the priest. The offering is Khir (preparation of rice in milk and sugar), with sometimes admixture of ghee, raisins, dates, coconuts, and pieces of sugar candy in odd numbers. The recitation of Sanskrit hymns from scriptures along with offerings of flowers and rice in spring completes a form of worship. A portion of these offerings is distributed among relatives and friends.

At dusk, hundreds of people assemble round the spring with candles waving. The head priest also waves a candle, while the other priests blow conch shells and horns, beat timbrels, ring bells, and wave morechells (peacock's tail feathers). All pilgrims recite hymns, producing a singular mixture of sounds, and creating a religious atmosphere diffusing spiritual vibrations everywhere. The whole congregation standing in a devotional mood concentrates on the image

[1] On this day the Brahmans of the valley draw figures of the sun in all seven colours on the floors, kitchens, compounds of their houses. This is probably done to show that the sun occupies its highest position in the heavens on this day.

of the goddess and seeks to merge itself in the Primordial Energy pervading the universe. I think, this united form of worship more impressive if some set verses were selected and recited together than individual for sometime. After this had been done every person could follow his own way according to his own peculiar bent of mind.

Every Kashmiri Hindu has his own guardian goddess. When a child is born to him or when his son is married, he has to take him to his guardian goddess for thankoffering. Khir Bhawáni is, the guardian goddess of the majority of the Kashmiri Brahmans.

## The Cleansing of Khirbhawáni Spring

The spring has been cleansed twice within living memory and some of the idols (murties) taken out of it, have been placed in the temple.

Once again the Khirbhawáni Spring was cleansed. The operation which began on the 30th of January 1970 lasted till July 10, 1970. An electric pump conducted these operations round the clock. The mire and sediment which lay at the bottom were removed. A large quantity of water flowed out making the spring fresh and sparkling. As a result of this operation the spring bubbled out in several directions. In the middle of the spring, milky water flowed out. While the mud and mire were being removed several golden ornaments and silver pieces offered by the devotees from time to time were collected

from the bottom of the spring. The spring was thus cleansed for the fourth time.

## Improvement of the Shrine

The holy Khir Bhawani Shrine at Tulamulla (Ganderbal) besides invested with sacred associations since very ancient times is also a place of great tourist interest. Situated as it is, in the peaceful surroundings of bountiful nature, caters to the requirements of devotees seeking spiritual peace and calm as also those fond of sight seeing. In the recent years the Dharmarth Trust of the State has done a good job in improving the surroundings of the shrine and also has provided comfortable accommodation for devotees and yatries-cum-tourists who come every year in millions to worship at the shrine of all India fame.

Formerly the shrine was confined to about 50 kanals of land and the influx of people on festival days was so huge that they could not be accommodated within this limited space. The Dharmarth Trust, under whose care the shrine is, felt the need for acquiring more land for the shrine in view of the difficulty faced by the devotees on the festival days. Therefore, more land was acquired and the area extended. Dharamshalas have been constructed for conveniently performing *Puja* during rains and in the scorching heat of the sun. A Puja Mandap of 34′×17′ size in front of the sacred Kund has been constructed at a cost of Rs. 52,000. Hawan Sheds have been constructed to

cater to the needs of the public for performing Yagna. A 3 H.P. Motor has been purchased for bailing out water from the sacred Kund which is generally cleaned after 2-3 years, and a pump shed constructed for the purpose.

For beautification of the shrine, marble walling has been raised on all the all sides of the Kund which has been enclosed by an iron railing. Stone platforms around the chinar trees have been built up. Electric arrangements have been very much improved and street lights provided.

With the addition of 18 kanals of land outside the shrine premises a main gate of good design has been constructed at a cost of Rs. 73,000. On the whole the Trust has been doing very good constructive work in respect of providing facilities to devotees-cum-tourists who come to worship the shrine from all over the country though there is much room for improvement still.

[illegible] to the needs of the public for [illegible] Yatra [illegible] Motor has been [illegible] charged [illegible] [illegible] from the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] for this purpose.

For [illegible] of the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] all [illegible] [illegible] has been [illegible] by an [illegible] [illegible] platform [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] arrangements [illegible] improved and [illegible] lights [illegible]

With the addition of [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] of Rs. [illegible] On the [illegible] and constructive [illegible] building to [illegible] who [illegible] to worship the [illegible] from all over the country though there is much room for improvements still.

## BY THE SAME AUTHOR

### Beautiful Valleys of Kashmir and Ladakh

SOME PRESS NOTES

A most delightful book...it will be what the Greeks used to call..."a possession for ever" because it is full of so many beautiful things'.

—LORD BISHOP OF LAHORE

'The author is lyrical...obviously very knowledgeable... It contains excellent photographs and coloured plates of Kashmir flowers...'

—*The Statesman*

'... First hand information ... the author wields a facile pen and exposes in a beautiful manner the magic concealed in the Valleys...'

—*The Punjab Educational Journal*

### Birds of Kashmir

The book is fairly illustrated. The short stories connected with birds has made the book more interesting and the manner in which it has been presented, the reader will, it is hoped, find much food for thought.

### Srinagar and its Environs

Containing an account of seasonal beauty, interesting sites, picnic nooks, boat trips, mountain climbs, flowers and birds. Folklores have also been added.

### Gulmarg and its Environs

It exposes vividly the charms of the famous hill station of the Kashmir Himàlaya. The flora and founa of the place, the pleasant resorts, and excursion to the side valleys have been mentioned.

### The Mysterious Cave of Amar Nath

It describes beautifully the famous cave of all India fame.

### Pahalgam and its Environs

### Rahas Amar Nath Gupha (in Hindi)



SIND VALLEY FROM WAYIL BRIDGE